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NEITHER VICTIMS NOR EXECUTIONERS
BY ALBERT CAMUS

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CONTENTS

Vol. IV, No. 10

Albert Camus (1913-1960)

3 Waldo Frank

Neither Victims Nor Executioners

4 Albert Camus

Africa Against the Bomb (II)

11 A. J. Muste

Poem

14 Richard Mayes

The Revolution in Africa (II)

15 Sidney Lens

Letters

19

In This Issue:

LATEST NEWS ON THE SAHARA PROTEST (see page 11): The seven-man Protest Team penetrated 66 miles into French territory, on foot and without visas, before being seized by French police. The police, who had previously confiscated their vehicles, took the men back to Ghana and dumped them there.

In Ghana, Team member Michael Randle, chairman of the British Direct Action Committee, issued a statement criticizing Prime Minister Macmillan for having asserted that the Sahara test would not harm the people of Ghana. He said: "I am ashamed as an Englishman that a British Prime Minister, after what he himself describes as a warm welcome by the people of Ghana, should make such an untrue statement."

Subsequently, according to a cable received by a representative of the South West African tribes at the United Nations, Michael Scott went to Nigeria in an attempt to fly to Tunis, where the All-African People's Conference is holding its convention.

Following a speech by Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Bourguiba, the delegates to the convention marched to the French Embassy demanding that de Gaulle abandon the Sahara test. They were joined by nearly a hundred thousand Tunisians.

In Accra, the Ghana Council for Nuclear Disarmament asked Billy Graham to condemn the Sahara test. After he declined to do so, on the ground that this is a "political" matter, attendance at his meetings fell drastically.

"Neither Victims Nor Executioners" first appeared in English in a special issue of Dwight Macdonald's *Politics* devoted to contemporary French writing (July-August 1947). It is reprinted by permission of Mr. Macdonald.

WALDO FRANK is a novelist and cultural critic whose recent books include *Rediscovery of Man: a memoir and a methodology of modern life*; *Bridgehead: Drama of Israel and Not Heaven*, his latest work of fiction.

RICHARD MAYES teaches English at New York University.

The illustration on page 11 is by **DOUGLAS GORSLINE**.

The poem on the January cover was by **M. C. RICHARDS**.

THE COVER is by Vera Williams.

The thirty-seventh **ANNUAL DINNER** of the War Resisters League will be held at the C. & L. Restaurant, at Seventy-fourth Street and Broadway, in New York City, on Friday, February 26th, at 6:30 p. m. Norman Thomas will introduce Fenner Brockway, Labor M.-P. and chairman of the Movement for Colonial Freedom, who will speak on "Socialism and Africa," and Bayard Rustin will present a first-hand report on the Sahara Project. For reservations, which are five dollars per person, write or telephone the War Resisters League (5 Beekman St., New York 38, N. Y., BE-3-0463).

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ALBERT CAMUS

(1913-1960)

Camus hated violence; speeding is a form of violence, and he detested speeding. On the fatal day he intended to go to Sens by train and had already bought his ticket. Reluctantly he allowed himself to be persuaded by his friends to go with them by car. Reckoning from the time of their leaving the garage, the driver must have averaged over 80 miles per hour. This meaningless waste of a precious life—for no discernible purpose—is what Camus meant by "the Absurd." Pascal, his spiritual father, had already noted its prevalence in human life and death, and had used the word.

When I first met Camus, shortly after the close of the War, I had a vivid presentiment, which I now recognize as an intuition: This man will not live long. I am certain that I got this message from Camus, himself. He had caught tuberculosis during the bitter, starving days of the Resistance. I thought of this disease as a probable factor in Camus' having no more than a short life. But such a death would not have been "absurd," would have had meaning, as the price Camus paid for his brave underground work against the Nazis. Camus knew that his death would lack such logic. The "absurdity" of what happened brought forward color and passion and pathos to his immediate prose. Camus got over his tuberculosis. His health hardened, and he became world-famous. The Absurd was waiting for him, and I am sure he knew it. His expression of the Absurd as the predicament of modern man was so breathlessly urgent because he already was experiencing it in his own person.

Pascal's great pages memorialize the plight of the intelligent man who can rationalise the human condition only by letting himself be forced back upon the classic Revelation of the Church, which is before and beyond human reason. Camus marks the plight of the more modern man for whom the ancient Revelation is no longer valid—who refuses to fall back on it as contrary to his reason, yet cannot go forward into a new-formed Revelation acceptable to our age of science.

This insoluble dream is the theme of Camus: of the modern who needs to believe and cannot, who needs to know his part in Cosmos and cannot, lacking the strength to replace that part, as his fathers formed it, with terms more valid to our day. Because this plight is common in the West, and because Camus eloquently dramatised it in his plays and stories, he became the voice of the best of an entire generation.

Unlike the Neo-orthodox of many creeds (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish), who successfully sink back to an old Order, finding there solace and comfort; and unlike the "beatniks" who simply (too simply) and stupidly give up the search for meaning, Camus confessed his loss and continued his search.

Camus was the writer of prose worthy to be ranked with that of Pascal, his spiritual and more fortunate predecessor. It imaged the man. And for us who knew him personally, the man will always stand forth. An age of incredible violence distilled his hate of violence. An age of cowardly confusions matured his integrity in refusing to give up the search for Knowledge because he had not found it. When I first saw Camus, my thought was of his nobility. This is the final, the definitive term to describe him.

WALDO FRANK

NEITHER VICTIMS NOR EXECUTIONERS

ALBERT CAMUS

The Century of Fear

The 17th century was the century of mathematics, the 18th that of the physical sciences, and the 19th that of biology. Our 20th century is the century of fear. I will be told that fear is not a science. But science must be somewhat involved since its latest theoretical advances have brought it to the point of negating itself while its perfected technology threatens the globe itself with destruction. Moreover, although fear itself cannot be considered a science, it is certainly a technique.

The most striking feature of the world we live in is that most of its inhabitants—with the exception of pietists of various kinds—are cut off from the future. Life has no validity unless it can project itself toward the future, can ripen and progress. Living against a wall is a dog's life. True—and the men of my generation, those who are going into the factories and the colleges, have lived and are living more and more like dogs.

This is not the first time, of course, that men have confronted a future materially closed to them. But hitherto they have been able to transcend the dilemma by words, by protests, by appealing to other values which lent them hope. Today no one speaks any more (except those who repeat themselves) because history seems to be in the grip of blind and deaf forces which will heed neither cries of warning, nor advice, nor entreaties. The years we have just gone through have killed something in us. And that something is simply the old confidence man had in himself, which led him to believe that he could always elicit human reactions from another man if he spoke to him in the language of a common humanity. We have seen men lie, degrade, kill, deport, torture—and each time it was not possible to persuade them not to do these things because they were sure of themselves and because one cannot appeal to an abstraction, i. e., the representative of an ideology.

Mankind's long dialogue has just come to an end. And naturally a man with whom one cannot reason is a man to be feared. The result is that—besides those who have not spoken out because they thought it useless—a vast conspiracy of silence has spread all about us, a conspiracy accepted by those who are frightened and who

rationalize their fears in order to hide them from themselves, a conspiracy fostered by those whose interest it is to do so. "You shouldn't talk about the Russian culture purge—it helps reaction." "Don't mention the Anglo-American support of Franco—it encourages communism." Fear is certainly a technique.

What with the general fear of a war now being prepared by all nations and the specific fear of murderous ideologies, who can deny that we live in a state of terror? We live in terror because persuasion is no longer possible; because man has been wholly submerged in History; because he can no longer tap that part of his nature, as real as the historical part, which he recaptures in contemplating the beauty of nature and of human faces; because we live in a world of abstractions, of bureaus and machines, of absolute ideas and of crude messianism. We suffocate among people who think they are absolutely right, whether in their machines or in their ideas. And for all who can live only in an atmosphere of human dialogue and sociability, this silence is the end of the world.

To emerge from this terror, we must be able to reflect and to act accordingly. But an atmosphere of terror hardly encourages reflection. I believe, however, that instead of simply blaming everything on this fear, we should consider it as one of the basic factors in the situation, and try to do something about it. No task is more important. For it involves the fate of a considerable number of Europeans who, fed up with the lies and violence, deceived in their dearest hopes and repelled by the idea of killing their fellowmen in order to convince them, likewise repudiate the idea of themselves being convinced that way. And yet such is the alternative that at present confronts so many of us in Europe who are not of any party—or ill at ease in the party we have chosen—who doubt socialism has been realized in Russia or liberalism in America, who grant to each side the right to affirm its truth but refuse it the right to impose it by murder, individual or collective. Among the powerful of today, these are the men without a kingdom. Their viewpoint will not be recognized (and I say "recognized," not "triumph"), nor will they recover

their kingdom until they come to know precisely what they want and proclaim it directly and boldly enough to make their words a stimulus to action. And if an atmosphere of fear does not encourage accurate thinking, then they must first of all come to terms with fear.

To come to terms, one must understand what fear means: what it implies and what it rejects. It implies and rejects the same fact: a world where murder is legitimate, and where human life is considered trifling. This is the great political question of our times, and before dealing with other issues, one must take a position on it. Before anything can be done, two questions must be put: "Do you or do you not, directly or indirectly, want to be killed or assaulted? Do you or do you not, directly or indirectly, want to kill or assault?" All who say No to both these questions are automatically committed to a series of consequences which must modify their way of posing the problem. My aim here is to clarify two or three of these consequences.

Saving Our Skins

I once said that, after the experiences of the last two years, I could no longer hold to any truth which might oblige me, directly or indirectly, to demand a man's life. Certain friends whom I respected retorted that I was living in Utopia, that there was no political truth which could not one day reduce us to such an extremity, and that we must therefore either run the risk of this extremity or else simply put up with the world as it is.

They argued the point most forcefully. But I think they were able to put such force into it only because they were unable to really *imagine* other people's death. It is a freak of the times. We make love by telephone, we work not on matter but on machines, and we kill and are killed by proxy. We gain in cleanliness, but lose in understanding.

But the argument has another, indirect meaning: it poses the question of Utopia. People like myself want not a world in which murder no longer exists (we are not so crazy as that!) but rather one in which murder is not legitimate. Here indeed we are Utopian—and contradictory. For we do live, it is true, in a world where murder is legitimate, and we ought to change it if we do not like it. But it appears that we cannot change it without risking murder. Murder thus throws us back on murder, and we will continue to live in terror whether we accept the fact with resignation or wish to abolish it by means which merely replace one terror with another.

It seems to me every one should think this over. For what strikes me, in the midst of polemics, threats and outbursts of violence, is the fundamental good will of every one. From Right to Left, every one, with the exception of a few swindlers, believes that his particular truth is the one to make men happy. And yet the combination of all these good intentions has produced the

present infernal world, where men are killed, threatened and deported, where war is prepared, where one cannot speak freely without being insulted or betrayed. Thus if people like ourselves live in a state of contradiction, we are not the only ones, and those who accuse us of Utopianism are possibly themselves also living in a Utopia, a different one but perhaps a more costly one in the end.

Let us, then, admit that our refusal to legitimize murder forces us to reconsider our whole idea of Utopia. This much seems clear: Utopia is whatever is in contradiction with reality. From this standpoint, it would be completely Utopian to wish that men should no longer kill each other. That would be absolute Utopia. But a much sounder Utopia is that which insists that murder be no longer legitimized. Indeed, the Marxian and the capitalist ideologies, both based on the idea of progress, both certain that the application of their principles must inevitably bring about a harmonious society, are Utopian to a much greater degree. Furthermore, they are both at the moment costing us dearly.

We may therefore conclude, practically, that in the next few years the struggle will be not between the forces of Utopia and the forces of reality, but between different Utopias which are attempting to be born into reality. It will be simply a matter of choosing the least costly among them. I am convinced that we can no longer reasonably hope to save everything, but that we can at least propose to save our skins, so that a future, if not *the* future, remains a possibility.

Thus (1) to refuse to sanction murder is no more Utopian than the "realistic" ideologies of our day, and (2) the whole point is whether these latter are more or less costly. It may, therefore, be useful to try to define, in Utopian terms, the conditions which are needed to bring about the pacification of men and nations. This line of thought, assuming it is carried on without fear and without pretensions, may help to create the preconditions for clear thinking and a provisional agreement between men who want to be neither victims nor executioners. In what follows, the attempt will be not to work out a complete position, but simply to correct some current misconceptions and to pose the question of Utopia as accurately as possible. The attempt, in short, will be to define the conditions for a political position that is modest—i. e. free of messianism and disencumbered of nostalgia for an earthly paradise.

The Self-Deception of the Socialists

If we agree that we have lived for ten years in a state of terror and still so live, and that this terror is our chief source of anxiety, then we must see what we can oppose to this terror. Which brings up the question of socialism. For terror is legitimized only if we assent to the principle: "the end justifies the means." And this

principle in turn may be accepted only if the effectiveness of an action is posed as an absolute end, as in nihilistic ideologies (anything goes, success is the only thing worth talking about), or in those philosophies which make History an absolute end (Hegel, followed by Marx: the end being a classless society, everything is good that leads to it).

Such is the problem confronting French Socialists, for example. They are bothered by scruples. Violence and oppression, of which they had hitherto only a theoretical idea, they have now seen at first hand. And they have had to ask themselves whether, as their philosophy requires, they would consent to use that violence themselves, even as a temporary expedient and for a quite different end. The author of a recent preface to Saint-Just, speaking of men of an earlier age who had similar scruples, wrote contemptuously: "They recoiled in the face of horrors." True enough. And so they deserved to be despised by strong, superior spirits who could live among horrors without flinching. But all the same, they gave a voice to the agonized appeal of commonplace spirits like ourselves, the millions who constitute the raw material of History and who must some day be taken into account, despite all contempt.

A more important task, I think, is to try to understand the state of contradiction and confusion in which our Socialists now exist. We have not thought enough about the moral crisis of French Socialism, as expressed, for example in a recent party congress. It is clear that our Socialists, under the influence of Leon Blum and even more under the pressure of events, have preoccupied themselves much more with moral questions (the end does not justify all means) than in the past. Quite properly, they wanted to base themselves on principles which rise superior to murder. It is also clear that these same Socialists want to preserve Marxian doctrine, some because they think one cannot be revolutionary without being Marxist, others, by fidelity to party tradition, which tells them that one cannot be socialist without being Marxist. The chief task of the last party congress was to reconcile the desire for a morality superior to murder with the determination to remain faithful to Marxism. But one cannot reconcile what is irreconcilable.

For if it is clear that Marxism is true and there is logic in History, then political realism is legitimate. It is equally clear that if the moral values extolled by the Socialist Party are legitimate, then Marxism is absolutely false since it claims to be absolutely true. From this point of view, the famous "going beyond" Marxism in an idealistic and humanitarian direction is a joke and an idle dream. It is impossible to "go beyond" Marx, for he himself carried his thought to its extreme logical consequences. The Communists have a solid logical basis for using the lies and the violence which the

Socialists reject, and the basis is that very dialectic which the Socialist want to preserve. It is therefore hardly surprising that the Socialist congress ended by simply putting forward simultaneously two contradictory positions—a conclusion whose sterility appears in the results of the recent elections.

This way, confusion will never end. A choice was necessary, and the Socialists would not or could not choose.

I have chosen this example not to score off the Socialists but to illustrate the paradoxes among which we live. To score off the Socialists, one would have to be superior to them. This is not yet the case. On the contrary, I think this contradiction is common to all those of whom I speak, those who want a society which we can both enjoy and respect; those who want men to be both free and just, but who hesitate between a freedom in which they know justice is finally betrayed and a justice in which they see freedom suppressed from the first. Those who know What Is To Be Done or What Is To Be Thought make fun of this intolerable anguish. But I think it would be better, instead of jeering at it, to try to understand and clarify this anguish, see what it means, interpret its quasi-total rejection of a world which provokes it, and trace out the feeble hope that suffuses it.

A hope that is grounded precisely in this contradiction, since it forces—or will force—the Socialists to make a choice. They will either admit that the end justifies the means, in which case murder can be legitimized; or else, they will reject Marxism as an absolute philosophy, confining themselves to its critical aspect, which is often valuable. If they choose the first, their moral crisis will be ended, and their position will be unambiguous. If the second, they will exemplify the way our period marks the end of ideologies, that is, of absolute Utopias which destroy themselves, in History, by the price they ultimately exact. It will then be necessary to choose a most modest and less costly Utopia. At least it is in these terms that the refusal to legitimize murder forces us to pose the problem.

Yes, that is the question we must put, and no one, I think, will venture to answer it lightly.

Parody of Revolution

Since August, 1944, everybody talks about revolution, and quite sincerely too. But sincerity is not in itself a virtue: some kinds are so confused that they are worse than lies. Not the language of the heart but merely that of clear thinking is what we need today. Ideally, a revolution is a change in political and economic institutions in order to introduce more freedom and justice; practically, it is a complex of historical events, often undesirable ones, which brings about this happy transformation.

Can one say that we use this word today in its classical

sense? When people nowadays hear the word, "revolution," they think of a change in property relations (generally collectivisation) which may be brought about either by majority legislation or by a minority coup.

This concept obviously lacks meaning in present historical circumstances. For one thing, the violent seizure of power is a romantic idea which the perfection of armaments has made illusory. Since the repressive apparatus of a modern State commands tanks and airplanes, tanks and airplanes are needed to counter it. 1789 and 1917 are still historic dates, but they are no longer historic examples.

And even assuming this conquest of power were possible, by violence or by law, it would be effective only if France (or Italy or Czechoslovakia) could be put into parentheses and isolated from the rest of the world. For, in the actual historical situation of 1946, a change in our own property system would involve, to give only one example, such consequences to our American credits that our economy would be threatened with ruin. A rightwing coup would be no more successful, because of Russia with her millions of French Communist voters and her position as the dominant continental power. The truth is—excuse me for stating openly what every one knows and no one says—the truth is that we French are not free to make a revolution. Or at least that we can be no longer revolutionary all by ourselves, since there no longer exists any policy, conservative or socialist, which can operate exclusively with a national framework.

Thus we can only speak of world revolution. The revolution will be made on a world scale or it will not be made at all. But what meaning does this expression still retain? There was a time when it was thought that international reform would be brought about by the conjunction or the synchronization of a number of national revolutions—a kind of totting-up of miracles. But today one can conceive only the extension of a revolution that has already succeeded. This is something Stalin has very well understood, and it is the kindest explanation of his policies (the other being to refuse Russia the right to speak in the name of revolution).

This viewpoint boils down to conceiving of Europe and the West as a single nation in which a powerful and well-armed minority is struggling to take power. But if the conservative forces—in this case, the USA—are equally well armed, clearly the idea of revolution is replaced by that of ideological warfare. More precisely, world revolution today involves a very great danger of war. Every future revolution will be a foreign revolution. It will begin with a military occupation—or, what comes to the same thing, the blackmail threat of one. And it will become significant only when the occupying power has conquered the rest of the world.

Inside national boundaries, revolutions have already

been costly enough—a cost that has been accepted because of the progress they are assumed to bring. Today, the costs of a world war must be weighed against the progress that may be hoped for from either Russia or America gaining world power. And I think it of first importance that such a balance be struck, and that for once we use a little imagination about what this globe, where already thirty million fresh corpses lie, will be like after a cataclysm which will cost us ten times as many.

Note that this is a truly objective approach, taking account only of reality without bringing in ideological or sentimental considerations. It should give pause to those who talk lightly of revolution. The *present-day* content of this word must be accepted or rejected as a whole. If it be accepted, then one must recognize a conscious responsibility for the coming war. If rejected, then one must either come out for the status quo—which is a mood of absolute Utopia insofar as it assumes the "freezing" of history—or else give a new content to the word "revolution," which means assenting to what might be called relative Utopia. Those who want to change the world must, it seems to me, now choose between the charnel-house threatened by the impossible dream of history suddenly struck motionless, and the acceptance of a relative Utopia which gives some leeway to action and to mankind. Relative Utopia is the only realistic choice; it is our last frail hope of saving our skins.

International Democracy and Dictatorship

We know today that there are no more islands, that frontiers are just lines on a map. We know that in a steadily accelerating world, where the Atlantic is crossed in less than a day and Moscow speaks to Washington in a few minutes, we are forced into fraternity—or complicity. The forties have taught us that an injury done a student in Prague strikes down simultaneously a worker in Clichy, that blood shed on the banks of a Central European river brings a Texas farmer to spill his own blood in the Ardennes, which he sees for the first time. There is no suffering, no torture anywhere in the world which does not affect our everyday lives.

Many Americans would like to go on living closed off in their own society, which they find good. Many Russians perhaps would like to carry on their Statist experiment holding aloof from the capitalist world. They cannot do so, nor will they ever again be able to do so. Likewise, no economic problem, however minor it appears, can be solved outside the comity of nations. Europe's bread is in Buenos Aires, Siberian machine-tools are made in Detroit. Today, tragedy is collective.

We know, then, without shadow of a doubt, that the new order we seek cannot be merely national, or even continental; certainly not occidental nor oriental. It must be universal. No longer can we hope for anything

from partial solutions or concessions. We are living in a state of compromise, i. e., anguish today and murder tomorrow. And all the while the pace of history and the world is accelerating. The 21 deaf men, the war criminals of tomorrow, who today negotiate the peace carry on their monotonous conversations placidly seated in an express train which bears them toward the abyss at a thousand miles an hour.

What are the methods by which this world unity may be achieved, this international revolution realized in which the resources of men, of raw materials, of commercial markets and cultural riches may be better distributed? I see only two, and these two between them define our ultimate alternative.

The world can be united from above, by a single State more powerful than the others. The USSR or the USA could do it. I have nothing to say to the claim that they could rule and remodel the world in the image of their own society. As a Frenchman, and still more as a Mediterranean, I find the idea repellent. But I do not insist on this sentimental argument. My only objection is, as stated in the last section, that this unification could not be accomplished without war—or at least without serious risk of war. I will even grant what I do not believe: that it would not be an atomic war. The fact remains, nevertheless, that the coming war will leave humanity so mutilated and impoverished that the very idea of law and order will become anachronistic. Marx could justify, as he did, the war of 1870 for it was a provincial war fought with Chassepot rifles. In the Marxian perspective, a hundred thousand corpses are nothing if they are the price of the happiness of hundreds of millions of men. But the sure death of millions of men for the hypothetical happiness of the survivors seems too high a price to pay. The dizzy rate at which weapons have evolved, a historical fact ignored by Marx, forces us to raise anew the whole question of means and ends. And in this instance, the means can leave us little doubt about the end. Whatever the desired end, however lofty and necessary, whether happiness or justice or liberty—the means employed to attain it represent so enormous a risk and are so disproportionate to the slender hopes of success, that, in all sober objectivity, we must refuse to run this risk.

This leaves us only the alternative method of achieving a world order: the mutual agreement of all parties. This agreement has a name: international democracy. Of course every one talks about the U. N. But what is international democracy? It is a democracy which is international. (The truism will perhaps be excused, since the most self-evident truths are also the ones most frequently distorted.) International—or national—democracy is a form of society in which law has authority over those governed, law being the expression of the common will as expressed in a legislative body. An international legal

code is indeed now being prepared. But this code is made and broken by governments, that is by the executive power. We are thus faced with a regime of international dictatorship. The only way of extricating ourselves is to create a world parliament through elections in which all peoples will participate, which will enact legislation which will exercise authority over national governments. Since we do not have such a parliament, all we can do now is to resist international dictatorship; to resist on a world scale; and to resist by means which are not in contradiction with the end we seek.

The World Speeds Up

As every one knows, political thought today lags more and more behind events. Thus the French fought the 1914 war with 1870 methods, and the 1939 war with 1918 methods. Antiquated thinking is not, however, a French specialty. We need only recall that the future of the world is being shaped by liberal-capitalist principles, developed in the 18th century and by "scientific socialist" principles developed in the 19th. Systems of thought which, in the former case, date from the early years of modern industrialism, and, in the latter, from the age of Darwinism and the Renanian optimism, now propose to master the age of the atomic bomb, of sudden mutations, and of nihilism.

It is true that consciousness is always lagging behind reality: History rushes onward while thought reflects. But this inevitable backwardness becomes more pronounced the faster History speeds up. The world has changed more in the past fifty years than it did in the previous two hundred years. Thus we see nations quarreling over frontiers when every one knows that today frontiers are mere abstractions. Nationalism was, to all appearances, the dominant note at the Conference of the 21.

Today we concentrate our political thinking on the German problem, which is a secondary problem compared to the clash of empires which threatens us. But if tomorrow we resolve the Russo-American conflict, we may see ourselves once more outdistanced. Already the clash of empires is in process of becoming secondary to the clash of civilizations. Everywhere the colonial peoples are asserting themselves. Perhaps in ten years, perhaps in fifty, the dominance of Western civilization itself will be called into question. We might as well recognize this now, and admit these civilizations into the world parliament, so that its code of law may become truly universal, and a universal order be established.

The veto issue in the U. N. today is a false issue because the conflicting majorities and minorities are false. The USSR will always have the right to reject majority rule so long as it is a majority of ministers and not a majority of peoples, all peoples, represented by their delegates. Once such a majority comes into being, then

each nation must obey it or else reject its law—that is, openly proclaim its will to dominate. . . .

To reply once more and finally to the accusation of Utopia: for us, the choice is simple—Utopia or the war now being prepared by antiquated modes of thought. . . . Sceptical though we are (and as I am), realism forces us to this Utopian alternative. When our Utopia has become part of history, as with many others of like kind, men will find themselves unable to conceive reality without it. For History is simply man's desperate effort to give body to his most clairvoyant dreams.

A New Social Contract

All contemporary political thinking which refuses to justify lies and murder is led to the following conclusions: (1) domestic policy is in itself a secondary matter; (2) the only problem is the creation of a world order which will bring about those lasting reforms which are the distinguishing mark of a revolution; (3) within any given nation there exist now only administrative problems, to be solved provisionally after a fashion, until a solution is worked out which will be more effective because more general.

For example, the French Constitution can only be evaluated in terms of the support it gives or fails to give to a world order based on justice and the free exchange of ideas. From this viewpoint, we must criticise the indifference of our Constitution to the simplest human liberties. And we must also recognize that the problem of restoring the food supply is ten times more important than such issues as nationalization or election figures. Nationalization will not work in a single country. And although the food supply cannot be assured either within a single country, it is a more pressing problem and calls for expedients, provisional though they may be.

And so this viewpoint gives us a hitherto lacking criterion by which to judge domestic policy. Thirty editorials in *Aube* may range themselves every month against thirty in *Humanité*, but they will not cause us to forget that both newspapers, together with the parties they represent, have acquiesced in the annexation without a referendum of Briga and Tenda, and that they are thus accomplices in the destruction of international democracy. Regardless of their good or bad intentions, Mr. Bidault and Mr. Thorez are both in favor of international dictatorship. From this aspect, whatever other opinion one may have of them, they represent in our politics not realism but the most disastrous kind of Utopianism.

Yes, we must minimize domestic politics. A crisis which tears the whole world apart must be met on a world scale. A social system for everybody which will somewhat allay each one's misery and fear is today our logical objective. But that calls for action and for sacrifices, that is, for men. And if there are many today who,

in their secret hearts, detest violence and killing, there are not many who care to recognize that this forces them to reconsider their actions and thoughts. Those who want to make such an effort, however, will find in such a social system a rational hope and a guide to action.

They will admit that little is to be expected from present-day governments, since these live and act according to a murderous code. Hope remains only in the most difficult task of all: to reconsider everything from the ground up, so as to shape a living society inside a dying society. Men must therefore, as individuals, draw up among themselves, within frontiers and across them, a new social contract which will unite them according to more reasonable principles.

The peace movement I speak of could base itself, inside nations, on work-communities and, internationally, on intellectual communities; the former, organized co-operatively, would help as many individuals as possible to solve their material problems, while the latter would try to define the values by which this international community would live, and would also plead its cause on every occasion.

More precisely, the latter's task would be to speak out clearly against the confusions of the Terror and at the same time to define the values by which a peaceful world may live. The first objectives might be the drawing up of an international code of justice whose Article No. 1 would be the abolition of the death penalty, and an exposition of the basic principles of a sociable culture ("civilisation du dialogue"). Such an undertaking would answer the needs of an era which has found no philosophical justification for that thirst for fraternity which today burns in Western man. There is no idea, naturally, of constructing a new ideology, but rather of discovering a style of life.

Let us suppose that certain individuals resolve that they will consistently oppose to power the force of example; to authority, exhortation; to insult, friendly reasoning; to trickery, simple honor. Let us suppose they refuse all the advantages of present-day society and accept only the duties and obligations which bind them to other men. Let us suppose they devote themselves to orienting education, the press and public opinion toward the principles outlined here. Then I say that such men would be acting not as Utopians but as honest realists. They would be preparing the future and at the same time knocking down a few of the walls which imprison us today. If realism be the art of taking into account both the present and the future, of gaining the most while sacrificing the least, then who can fail to see the positively dazzling realism of such behavior?

Whether these men will arise or not I do not know. It is probable that most of them are even now thinking things over, and that is good. But one thing is sure: their efforts will be effective only to the degree they have the

courage to give up, for the present, some of their dreams, so as to grasp the more firmly the essential point on which our very lives depend. Once there, it will perhaps turn out to be necessary, before they are done, to raise their voices.

Towards Sociability

Yes, we must raise our voices. Up to this point, I have refrained from appealing to emotion. We are being torn apart by a logic of History which we have elaborated in every detail—a net which threatens to strangle us. It is not emotion which can cut through the web of a logic which has gone to irrational lengths, but only reason which can meet logic on its own ground. But I should not want to leave the impression, in concluding, that any program for the future can get along without our powers of love and indignation. I am well aware that it takes a powerful prime mover to get men into motion and that it is hard to throw one's self into a struggle whose objectives are so modest and where hope has only a rational basis—and hardly even that. But the problem is not how to carry men away; it is essential, on the contrary, that they not be carried away but rather that they be made to understand clearly what they are doing.

To save what can be saved so as to open up some kind of future—that is the prime mover, the passion and the sacrifice that is required. It demands only that we reflect and then decide, clearly, whether humanity's lot must be made still more more miserable in order to achieve far-off and shadowy ends, whether we should accept a world bristling with arms where brother kills brother; or whether, on the contrary, we should avoid bloodshed and misery as much as possible so that we give a chance for survival to later generations better equipped than we are.

For my part, I am fairly sure that I have made the choice. And, having chosen, I think that I must speak out, that I must state that I will never again be one of those, whoever they be, who compromise with murder, and that I must take the consequences of such a decision. The thing is done, and that is as far as I can go at present. Before concluding, however, I want to make clear the spirit in which this article is written.

We are asked to love or to hate such and such a country and such and such a people. But some of us feel too strongly our common humanity to make such a choice. Those who really love the Russian people, in gratitude for what they have never ceased to be—that world leaven which Tolstoy and Gorky speak of—do not wish for them success in power-politics, but rather want to spare them, after the ordeals of the past, a new and even more terrible bloodletting. So, too, with the American people, and with the peoples of unhappy Europe. This is the kind of elementary truth we are liable to forget amidst the furious passions of our time.

Yes, it is fear and silence and the spiritual isolation they cause that must be fought today. And it is sociability ("le dialogue") and the universal intercommunication of men that must be defended. Slavery, injustice and lies destroy this intercourse and forbid this sociability; and so we must reject them. But these evils are today the very stuff of History, so that many consider them necessary evils. It is true that we cannot "escape History," since we are in it up to our necks. But one may propose to fight within History to preserve from History that part of man which is not its proper province. That is all I have to say here. The "point" of this article may be summed up as follows:

Modern nations are driven by powerful forces along the roads of power and domination. I will not say that these forces should be furthered or that they should be obstructed. They hardly need our help and, for the moment, they laugh at attempts to hinder them. They will, then, continue. But I will ask only this simple question: what if these forces wind up in a dead end, what if that logic of History on which so many now rely turns out to be a will o' the wisp? What if, despite two or three world wars, despite the sacrifice of several generations and a whole system of values, our grandchildren—supposing they survive—find themselves no closer to a world society? It may well be that the survivors of such an experience will be too weak to understand their own sufferings. Since these forces are working themselves out and since it is inevitable that they continue to do so, there is no reason why some of us should not take on the job of keeping alive, through the apocalyptic historical vista that stretches before us, a modest thoughtfulness which, without pretending to solve everything, will constantly be prepared to give some human meaning to everyday life. The essential thing is that people should carefully weigh the price they must pay.

To conclude: all I ask is that, in the midst of a murderous world, we agree to reflect on murder and to make a choice. After that, we can distinguish those who accept the consequences of being murderers themselves or the accomplices of murderers, and those who refuse to do so with all their force and being. Since this terrible dividing line does actually exist, it will be a gain if it be clearly marked. Over the expanse of five continents throughout the coming years an endless struggle is going to be pursued between violence and friendly persuasion, a struggle in which, granted, the former has a thousand times the chances of success than that of the latter. But I have always held that, if he who bases his hopes on human nature is a fool, he who gives up in the face of circumstances is a coward. And henceforth, the only honorable course will be to stake everything on a formidable gamble: that words are more powerful than munitions.

(Translated by Dwight Macdonald)

AFRICA AGAINST THE BOMB (II)

A. J. MUSTE



AT THE CLOSE of last month's installment we left the Sahara Protest Team, surrounded by a hundred French police and soldiers fully armed, at a control post named Bittou, sixteen miles inside French territory in Upper Volta in West Africa. In a box added as we went to press, we reported that the Team had temporarily drawn back into Ghana and that then seven of its members had crossed into French territory in Upper Volta a second time and had again been stopped at the first control point they reached near a little village named Po.

Since this project protesting against the proposed explosion of an atomic bomb at Reggan in the Sahara Desert by the French government is, I think, the first *international* direct action program against nuclear war and certainly the first in which Western European and American pacifists had sought to enlist and train people of other continents—in this case Africans—in “positive nonviolent action” (a phrase common in West Africa) it should be useful to outline in some detail the problems the Team faced at Bittou and the course its members resorted to in dealing with them.

For one thing, there was an element of ambiguity in the relationship between the Team and the French officials, especially the three white officers in charge. The problem was in some respects similar to the one which conscientious objectors have in dealing with guards and trustees in prison. On the one hand, the latter must be recognized as fellow human beings. There is always the responsibility and possibility of getting them to see the true character of the role they are playing and to turn away from it. On the other hand, while the functionary is also a human being, it is equally true that in such situations the human being is a functionary. In order to maintain one's integrity and also the possibility of influencing fellow-prisoners, one must avoid the kind of “fraternization” with functionaries which in effect

makes one part of the coercive and brutalizing machinery, or at least enables it to operate more smoothly.

When the white French officers, offered drinks and food to Michael Scott and the other members of the Team's committee, they refused to accept such gifts. They did accept an offer that one or two Team members, under police guard, should be permitted once or twice a day to go into Bittou to purchase such things as bread and soft drinks. As time went on this became less and less satisfactory. The French, who had stopped the Team but declined formally to arrest them, got rid of the responsibility of providing for their keep or letting them go through. There was no clear *confrontation* of an issue.

Another element of ambiguity arose from a special factor in West African psychology: the French are to West Africans what Communists were not long ago to the majority of Americans (and still are to many) *viz.* incarnate devils. This is especially true for Ghanaians, who suspect the French of imperial designs against Ghana because of its vigorous championship of complete independence for all Africa. This bitterness stems partly from the general history of French imperialism in Africa; partly from the French atrocities in Indo-China a few years ago and in Algeria more recently. It is also the result of the way in which the French literally stripped Guinea of all administrative equipment and economic support when that country, under the lead of Sekou Touré, voted for complete independence.

In such an atmosphere some of the Ghanaian youths found it difficult to understand how you could expect to gain anything by any kind of conversation with white French officers. They even harbored the absurd suspicion that the Frenchwoman who served as interpreter for the Team was somehow “betraying” them when she conversed with the French. In the arguments that took place between Team members and the French, there

were times when the latter showed more restraint and good will than the former!

The Test of Patience

Lest there be any even temporary misunderstanding, a couple of observations should be recorded at once. This was the very first experience of the Ghanaian youths with nonviolent direct action. They had had experience as soldiers, and as participants in political demonstrations where sheer force of numbers dominated and violence was expected or encouraged. They had had no experience of "that other kind of force—patience", as one of them put it to me later. We had carried on daily intensive training sessions for two or three weeks. It is probable that for dramatic situations, such as arrest and imprisonment, the volunteers would have been prepared to function nonviolently. For the hard task of simply sticking it out day after day they were not as well prepared. One of the lessons to be drawn from the Sahara project is certainly that in similar situations the courses must be longer and more varied. However, just as for a soldier training and simulated situations are never the same as the experience of actual war, so the nonviolent resister only learns in actual experience what nonviolence means.

The other observation is that, although it was not always obvious under the severe stress at Bittou, the Sahara Project did much in Ghana, and to some extent in other parts of Africa, to dispel the unthinking anti-French emotionalism. It could hardly have done this if people like Michael Scott, Michael Randle and Francis Hoyland had not had records of opposing nuclear testing and armament at home in Great Britain; Pierre Martin and Esther Peter at home in France; Bayard Rustin and Bill Sutherland at home in the U. S. A.

In one of our training sessions shortly before the Team left Accra, a Ghanaian volunteer suddenly got up with his face alight and said: "Now I know what non-violence is. It means that if Ghana should decide to test an atomic bomb, I'd have to oppose that most of all".

I think it would be accurate to say that the foreign policy of the Ghana government had until recently tended to be anti-French. But in the foreign-policy debate in Parliament in December, the Foreign Minister struck a new note, which Ghana had learned mainly from the Sahara Project. He remarked that one of the members of his own Party, the C. P. P., had characterized Ghana policy as anti-French. "This," he said, "is not true. We are against French atomic policy—against nuclear testing by whomsoever carried on".

To return to the dilemma at Bittou, the Team had a huge truck, to carry enough food, water and petrol for ten persons the last five hundred miles through the Desert to Reggan, where none of these things could be

obtained at any price. They also had two Land Rovers (British style jeeps) and a second-hand jeep. They had been parked a little to one side of the main road since the Team first reached the control post. Suppose now that such a Team wishes to move on, to pass the barrier? How go about it? Assuming you could get to the closed gate, would you crash into it with your big truck? Would this be nonviolence?

An experiment was carried out at Bittou, to see what might happen if the vehicles were moved. It was agreed to move them a few feet, and then to hold a conference to assess the situation, on the basis of the reaction of the guards. As soon as the members got into the cars and turned on the engines, the one hundred police and soldiers closed in, with revolvers and rifles pointed at the cars; machine guns were passed to those who were supposed to use them in an emergency. In other words, if the Team's vehicles had moved forward, they would have encountered human beings, not a wooden barrier.

One thing was made clear. As Bayard Rustin has put it, "trucks and jeeps are lethal weapons" in such situations. Can they possibly be used by nonviolent resisters to run down police soldiers who are ordered to prevent passage? Assuming the answer is in the negative, how do people proceed nonviolently to carry the protest to another stage? The Team at Bittou could not work out an answer to that question.

There is one other pretty important factor that led to the decision after five days to pull back temporarily into Ghana for the kind of analysis and hammering out of program for a second phase, which seemed impossible of attainment at Bittou. This factor had to do with personality problems and personal relationships. I surmise that all who were close to the Sahara Project would emphasize that in planning direct action projects, especially of an international character, frank and serious attention should be given in advance to the question of the kind of people needed on a particular action; to the selection of personnel from among volunteers; and to the nature of the commitment and discipline required in the given situation.

It will be easy to understand that the withdrawal to Bolgo-Tanga was regarded by some as a gesture of despair. However, it turned out to be a brilliant improvisation. This is a tribute to the leadership, Scott, Randle, Rustin and Sutherland; to the exceptional qualities of some of the young Ghanaians; and to the spirit which the project had generated, which had to a remarkable degree fused all its twenty members into a fellowship, and which made it possible to work out a program for a new phase which met with general acceptance.

The main decision was to reduce to seven, the number of persons who would cross into French territory a

second time and attempt to get into the Sahara. Ten was the number who, according to the original plan, were to have made the final trek of five hundred miles to Reggan. The available cars could carry supplies for only that number. The seven who were selected to cross the border and again risk arrest or injury were Michael Scott, the leader, Michael Randle of the British Direct Action Committee, Bill Sutherland, American who had lived a number of years in Ghana, and four young Ghanaians, Arkhurst, Manso, Lindsay, and Akita. Three other Ghanaian citizens remained in the North but as liaison men on the Ghana side of the border.

It was agreed that Mokhekle of Basutoland should go back for the elections in his country early in January. Francis Hoyland returned to London, Bayard Rustin returned for a couple weeks to Accra, after which he had to return to the United States, as he had promised to work in the movement for racial integration here. Esther Peter returned a week later to France, where she has already given a much needed push to French protests against the Sahara test. Several Ghanaians returned to Accra to do educational work there.

It was agreed that the seven who took part in the second phase should pursue a more aggressive course when they met the French police and gendarmes. They would, for example, make it known to these functionaries that Team members, if not permitted to proceed, would consider themselves under arrest and would hold the police or troops responsible for providing food and water, the same as if they were in jail. They would insist on using their loudspeaker regularly, and would persistently seek to pass out literature and talk with travellers and people living nearby.

In line with this approach, when the seven were stopped again at the first control post, eleven miles inside Upper Volta, they did not park their vehicles off the road as at Bittou, but left them in the middle of the road a few yards from the barrier. Thus "normal passage was not possible," as Radio Ghana reported. All travellers and people living near by constantly saw the picture of the cars challenging the French with their slogan: "Stop the Sahara Tests".

Several times each day the seven walked to the barrier and applied for passage. When refused, they sat down across the road in front of the gate for a considerable time. As they sat they sang African songs and familiar hymns. At intervals Michael Scott said prayers.

At one point it looked as though the French were about to make a concession. They agreed to transmit a message to the President of the Upper Volta Parliament, although they had said at Bittou that this could not be done. This proved, however, to be a diversion, for in the end the Team were told that a matter of this kind was not for Upper Volta to decide but was in the jurisdiction of Paris. This was another proof that the handling of

the protest project had been planned and supervised from the start by the highest echelons of the French government. A Ghana official stationed in Washington has declared that this exposure by the Team of the illusory character of the "self-government" granted by the French to Africans is one of the most significant achievements of the project.

The Team members were prepared to stick it out indefinitely this time. But in two weeks a Reuter's dispatch in the *New York Times* from Ouagadougou, capital of Upper Volta, announced that they had been "arrested by the French authorities and deported to Ghana". From another source it was learned that their loudspeaker had been confiscated, which may be set down as symbolic of the basic fear which animated the French government throughout, the fear that the West African peoples would be reminded of the outrage the French were about to perpetrate on their soil and might join the *Protest en masse*.

At this writing, we lack details of the way in which the arrests were carried out. We do know that the French held the Team's vehicles at Po. The mayor of Accra made a trip to Po and formally demanded release of the vehicles, but so far without result.

Pierre Martin's Fast

Meanwhile, Pierre Martin, leading French pacifist who had been with the Team at Bittou, was carrying out an impressive supporting action. A few days before Christmas, he started a poster walk before the French Embassy in the heart of downtown Accra. On Christmas Eve, he began a week's fast. At the close of his fast on New Year's Eve, cabinet ministers Gbedemah and Wellbeck took part in an anti-bomb-test protest meeting. Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah sent Martin a message of congratulation for his courageous action as a French citizen. The message was a big feature of the meeting. Characteristically, the *New York Times* failed to report this at the time but later included an item about the Prime Minister's greeting to Martin in a story from Accra which featured British Prime Minister Macmillan's approval of the French test.

Stories relating to Macmillan's visit to West Africa produced further evidence that the Sahara Project was continuing to bear fruit. The Ghana Council for Nuclear Disarmament issued a statement severely condemning Macmillan's attitude. When a couple of days later Macmillan travelled west to Lagos, capital of Nigeria, the *New York Times* reported that thousands of students lined the route of his cavalcade, carrying posters. Some called for independence for Nigeria, which Britain is in the process of granting. The rest bore the slogan: "God forbids the Atom Bomb!" On January 18th, the *New York Times* reported that when the French government issued warnings to airlines indicating that the Reggan

test might take place soon, "it prompted another upsurge of protests by African states adjoining the region".

This statement is vague and sketchy, as all references by American news agencies to protests against the French policy have been. What is meant by "states adjoining the region"? If this means French West African states near the Sahara such as Senegal, Sudan and Niger (not to be confused with Nigeria), then this is a development of the utmost importance, and good reporting would give us detailed information. The great political defect in the opposition to the Sahara test has been that for months these West African governments which belong to the French Community have not uttered a single protest. They have even permitted de Gaulle's propaganda organs to announce that they "approve" of the French action. This is impossible. No African can at heart "approve" of this violation of African territory by the French, and no African official, except perhaps under the severest pressure, would dare to express public approval of the Sahara test. The resentment against it is visceral in character, so intense that there are informed people who believe that if the bomb is actually exploded at Reggan, Frenchmen will be physically assaulted in many parts of Africa. But all these West African states are involved in complicated negotiations about the organization of the French Community. Their economies are dependent on France. They have before their eyes the spectacle of how Guinea was stripped when it voted for independence. So they have kept silence. One of our hopes has been that at some point, with the Protest Team keeping the issue alive, popular resentment against the test might force the French West African leaders to protest in defiance of de Gaulle.

This brings up one other political factor. It had been assumed that Guinea and its leader, Sekou Touré, would give substantial support to the Sahara team. Early in December, however, a number of African papers quoted Touré as saying in Morocco that personally he was neither for nor against the test, but that Africa was against it! Touré made no effort to deny this report. In view of the treatment Guinea had received at the hands of France, and earlier indications of Guinean hostility to the Sahara test, it is impossible to avoid speculating as to whether there is a connection between Touré's recent visit to Moscow and his aloofness from the protest movement at a critical juncture. One inevitably recalls that it is doubtful whether Guinea could have survived, when it boldly voted for independence from France, but for two quick loans, one of ten million dollars from Ghana and another of three times that amount from Moscow.

We had some indications that Communists in Africa had little if any sympathy for the nonviolent action and it is obvious that Moscow has not made an issue of de

Gaulle's nuclear experiment. One may speculate that Khrushchev deems it advantageous, propaganda-wise, that the world should see the failure of the United States and Britain to stop this absurd and dangerous project of its NATO ally. Or one may guess that Khrushchev realizes that the balance of nuclear power is not going to be affected by the explosion of de Gaulle's atomic firecracker in the Sahara, and therefore will permit the latter to pursue his "mirage of nuclear might" in exchange for some assist to Soviet plans in North Africa, the Middle East, or Eastern Europe.

Act Three

As these words are written, we may be near the climax of this drama. Indications multiply that the French may explode the bomb any day. The preliminary warnings to airlines and the appearance of the sinister Jacques Soustelle on the scene in West Africa, seem to show that Paris is getting down to business. On the other hand, some days ago we received a cable from Michael Randle in Accra that on January 14th or 15th the Team would make a third attempt to penetrate French territory. This time the Team will travel light and concentrate on means to penetrate much farther in an attempt to arouse the latent hostility of Africans in and around the Sahara to the French plan to make Africa the site of French nuclear missiles and French nuclear power politics in Africa and the Middle East.

Poem

*How happy those "sons o' the morning"
must have been!*

*Aristotle says that the body reaches
its beautiful prime*

*Between the ages of thirty and thirty-five—
and the mind at forty-nine—*

*And we go out in a romantic haze
of medicine-extended*

*Adolescence, dying after seventy years
at the age of thirteen.*

RICHARD MAYES

THE REVOLUTION IN AFRICA (II)

SIDNEY LENS



THE SECOND WORLD WAR marks the turning point in Africa's modern history. To win the war the Western powers had to affirm a principle which they had violated for centuries—the right of self-determination. Roosevelt and Churchill proclaimed the Atlantic Charter and promised to the post-war world the "four freedoms." In a private talk with the Sultan (now King) of Morocco, Roosevelt asserted that this time the great powers meant what they were saying. When young Africans from Kenya, the Gold Coast, the Rhodesias, and North Africa were recruited for Western armies, they were told that the war was being fought not only for the freedom of Europe—but for Africa's freedom as well. These young men were later to become the backbone of guerilla armies against the French in North Africa and the "positive action" campaigns against the British in West, Central and East Africa.

A second factor in the emergence of nationalism was the cold war. For the first time since imperialism flashed across historical horizons, the great powers were now challenged, not by a decadent feudal system, but by a dynamic Communist system. The West had to cater to world opinion.

A third factor contributing to the revolutionary conflagration was the *world-wide* growth of nationalism. In retrospect, it seems a miracle that twenty-one nations have won their independence since the war. People with little education, seemingly at the mercy of modern Western armaments, were able to force the foreign powers to leave their soil after a century or more of domination. So deep was the hatred of the European that it unified the colonial populations into solid and determined groups, emboldened by the dream of freedom that for the first time seemed possible of achievement.

The fires of revolution first broke out in North Africa and Madagascar at the end of the war. In 1943, by agreement, French troops replaced the British in Madagascar. In accord with the promises of the Atlantic Charter, the French decided to introduce a few reforms. The four million Malagasy people were to be represented by three delegates to the French Parliament. Fifty thousand French colonists were likewise awarded three deputies

—hardly a democratic distribution, but a great improvement over the past. Unfortunately for the French, the three native deputies decided to press their advantage further; they asked for full independence within the French Union.

The Quai D'Orsay refused this request. Tempers flared, "incidents" occurred. A military camp was attacked by the natives at Mouramanja. When the outburst was over, the three elected deputies were in jail, first sentenced to death and then, by commutation, to life imprisonment in the Comores Islands. Thousands were arrested, and according to official figures, eighty thousand natives and two hundred French were killed. The Malagasy Council claims that two hundred and twenty thousand were massacred, that men were taken up in planes and thrown out—without parachutes; that others were buried alive.

Similar developments occurred in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, although the number of dead were less. Forty-five thousand died in Algeria. Towns like Sétif and Guelma were leveled to the ground after demonstrations by the nationalist movement. Seven thousand were killed in Tunisia, and if it had not been for the intervention of an American consul, the figure might have been larger.

The first wave of nationalist uprisings in Africa was put down by the French with this orgy of violence. But nationalism could not be checked. The victories of the freedom movements that followed, in India, Ceylon, Burma, and Indonesia, rekindled the flame in Africa. After France was defeated in Viet Nam and after further demonstrations, strikes, and guerilla struggles in Tunisia and Morocco, the French agreed, in 1956, to grant independence to Tunisia and Morocco. Algeria, where there are one million *colons* as against nine million Arabs, was again refused freedom.

The first African victory was in Egypt. Technically, Egypt had been granted its "independence" in 1936 with the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty, but the British continued to dominate the country through large military installations and control of the Suez Canal. When King Farouk refused to oust Prime Minister Aly Maher in 1942, the British surrounded Abdin Palace

and forced the King to accept their candidate for Prime Minister. The revolution that broke out on July 23, 1952 was directed, therefore, not primarily at the corrupt hedonist, Farouk, but at British domination and feudalism.

The Progressive Generals

It is interesting that the revolution was organized and carried out by army dissidents under General Mohamed Naguib and Lieutenant-Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser. To us in America this may seem incredible, because our military plays such a reactionary role. But in many underdeveloped countries the young officer class comes from the peasantry, and is frequently responsive to peasant interests. Egypt was already in turmoil when Nasser organized the Free Officers Committee, composed of four hundred young officers, most of them under the rank of major. On January 26, 1952, there were widespread riots in Cairo; hotels and stores were burned, the city was sacked. The young officers were articulating the wishes of the intelligentsia and peasants for freedom. That Nasser understood the character of his revolution is indicated by this statement from one of his articles:

Every people on earth goes through two revolutions, a political revolution by which it wrests the right to govern itself from the hand of tyranny or from the army stationed upon its soil against its will; and a social revolution involving the conflict of the classes and which settles down when justice is secured to the inhabitants of the united nation . . . The terrible experience through which our people is going is that we are having both revolutions at once.

The second major revolt in Africa was below the Sahara, in what is now called Ghana but was then known as the Gold Coast. Here it was the people themselves who by direct action forced the British to accede. In their propaganda, the British say that Ghana's independence is the "combined achievement of both the nationalist movement led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and of the British government"; but this hardly conforms to the facts. Nkrumah had to spend fourteen months in prison and the people had to conduct all kinds of "positive action" before the British decided that discretion was the better part of valor.

After the war, the nationalist movement of the Gold Coast, the United Gold Coast Convention, expanded rapidly. On February 28, 1948, African war veterans demonstrated before the Government House, but the police broke up the demonstration and killed two of its members. This only incited the people; they had reached that "mood of desperation" which is the prelude to all revolutions. More demonstrations took place in sympathy with the men killed, and this time twenty-

nine were shot down. When Nkrumah wired the British demanding "self-government immediately," they answered by declaring a state of emergency. J. B. Danquah, head of the U. G. C. C., Nkrumah, and others were banished without trial to remote areas. But in 1949, after a commission of inquiry had surveyed the problem, the British agreed to make constitutional changes. Nkrumah and the others were released, and a split occurred in the nationalist movement over strategy, with Nkrumah organizing his more radical Peoples Convention Party. In 1950, Nkrumah called a general strike and was sentenced to two years in prison for his "illegal activities." While he was in jail, the British held the first election—again, in an attempt to quiet the storms—and Nkrumah's party won an overwhelming victory, thirty-four seats out of thirty-eight constituencies. Nkrumah was released from jail and the Ghanaians made steady progress until, in 1957, they were given total independence.

Each nationalist struggle triggers chain reactions. North Africa stimulates the revolution in Asia; the Asian revolution stirs people's hearts in Africa. Egypt and Ghana renew the confidence of the people throughout the continent. The French retreat in Viet Nam helps Morocco and Tunisia win independence. And the five-year war in Algeria, in which four hundred thousand Algerians have already been killed, gains important results for the people of French Equatorial Africa and French West Africa. Faced with further losses, the de Gaulle government, when it came to power in 1958, offered the twelve units of these two countries a choice of semi-autonomy within a "French Community" or independence. Guinea chose independence. The other eleven accepted the Community—for the time being. They too now have African governments, and most likely will soon be fully independent within a French Commonwealth similar to the British Commonwealth.

Perhaps indicative of the process of African revolution is the Mau Mau civil war in Kenya. This was a pivotal struggle for all of East and Central Africa. Our Western newspapers pictured Mau Mau as an irresponsible offensive by savage Kikuyu tribesmen to achieve political power. But it was nothing of the sort. It was not an offensive action but a defensive one. The savagery, for the most part, was on the side of the British, and especially the sixty thousand white settlers. Significantly, only thirty-two whites were killed by Mau Mau, as against 1,812 Africans. This hardly indicates an "offensive" to seize power. No railroad ties were blown up, no telephone communications cut, and no attempt was made to invade the capital, Nairobi, even though it is only eight miles from the Kikuyu reserves. In the counter-offensive by the British, 10,534 Africans were killed in battle; 78,000 were put into detention camps—without trial; 1,068 were executed, and some hundreds

of thousands were forcibly placed in emergency villages where they could be more easily controlled.

The Mau Mau war was actually a struggle that evolved out of the white man's fears and the black man's confidence. Jomo Kenyatta, whose radical activities go back to 1922, returned to Kenya in 1946 to become president of the Kenya African Union. Within a few years the Union had a hundred thousand members and the unquestionable allegiance of the population. When Kenyatta spoke, crowds of twenty-five thousand gathered to hear his message of liberation. His strategy was to pressure the British by organizing boycotts and other positive action.

Alarmed by the spread of nationalism, the white settler population decided to take action. They agreed to put responsibility in the hands of the native chiefs. These men, though traditionally elected by their people, were British tools—paid by the British, and removed if they did not serve British interests. The chiefs were to organize "Home Guard Forces" to ferret out the "subversives" in their tribal areas. Settlers in Nairobi were confident that this plan would bring them a half century of "peace"—continued racial domination.

But the strategy failed abysmally. It led to a war which the black man lost militarily but won politically. Instead of looking forward to fifty years of "peace," the settler is now on the defensive and will inevitably have to yield power.

Today the Mau Mau war is practically over. Yet in the wake of the battle the British had to make far-reaching economic and political concessions. The United Kingdom poured more than a hundred million dollars into the country for development and security. Sixteen million dollars was spent on African farming alone. The African is now permitted to grow some cash crops, such as coffee, and the number of African students in school rose from three hundred and twenty-six thousand in 1947 to five hundred and one thousand ten years later. The African has a qualified franchise and fourteen members of the Legco. This year, when the British consider constitutional revision again, there will undoubtedly be more concessions. Tom Mboya, the thirty-two-year-old leader of one of the African political parties, has demanded a policy of "common roll" and "one man, one vote". This means that he wants all adults, regardless of race, to have the vote, and all candidates to be elected on the same non-racial ballot. This, of course, would give the African full control of the government, and it is unlikely that the British will grant the demand. But there is no doubt that the trend is inexorably in that direction. As one white leader told me: "We need fifty years to make a transition to African government. We hope we can get ten or fifteen. But we may be lucky to have five."

The Road to Independence

The story of Tanganyika's march in the direction of independence is breathtaking. Tanganyika had the usual strikes, meetings, demonstrations, boycotts, but no violence. The Tanganyika African National Union, led by humanist Julius Nyerere, the nearest thing to a Gandhian in Africa, has the undivided loyalty of the population. Its organization is most impressive for an underdeveloped country of nine million people: seven hundred thousand members, two thousand full-time officials and many offices, even in remote places.

In 1958, the British offered Nyerere the first election ever held in that nation. The offer was hedged with qualifications and racial restrictions which were meant to keep the African influence minimal. Under the qualified franchise, only those people could vote who had eight years of grammar school or earned a minimum of \$35 a month. Only fifty-five thousand people were eligible to cast a ballot under these circumstances; but since there are only twenty thousand whites and a hundred and five thousand Indians as against nine million Negroes, the Africans constituted two-thirds of the electorate anyway.

Even this, however, did not assure an African victory. The British insisted on what is called a "tri-partite ballot." Each elector, regardless of race, had to vote for one European, one Indian, and one African in each of the ten constituencies. Nyerere considered this handicap long and hard before he finally agreed to participate in the elections. The results, however, proved the wisdom of his approach. All the whites elected except one, the ten Africans and all the Indians (the one exception subsequently cast his lot with Nyerere,) are TANU and Nyerere sympathizers. While the elected members are still a minority of Legco (a majority are appointed), there is little doubt that this relationship will soon change.

Everywhere on the continent, in differing tempos, the situation is the same. The racial struggle is the class struggle, and the African everywhere is more confident and more willing to give up life and limb, if necessary, than ever before. Each incident tends to become a semi-revolution. The Africans in Nyasaland, led by Dr. Hastings Banda, ask for independence. The British and the Federation government refuse. Meetings, demonstrations, positive action. The government declares an emergency, thousands are incarcerated; but the struggle goes on. In Leopoldville, Belgian Congo, where even two years ago few people believed that freedom was on the agenda, a small incident ends in a significant revolt. A group of people who had just left a meeting were told by police on January 4, 1959 to "hurry up" and disperse. The result was a riot in which hundreds were killed and much property destroyed. A few

days later the Belgians agreed to a program leading to independence.

The end result of this spiralling conflict can only be independence for all of Africa within a decade or, at most, two. The tempo will depend very much on arithmetic and on pressures back in the mother country. The British could get out of Ghana more gracefully than Kenya because there is only a tiny settler element in Ghana and sixty thousand in Kenya. Nigeria, with its thirty-six million people, has become independent in large measure because it has only sixteen thousand Europeans within its borders. The British are leaving before they experience catastrophe, and they are yielding political power in the hopes of maintaining important economic privileges. The Belgians in the Congo pursue a similar strategy, trying to save what they can of their economic advantages.

In the dominion of Southern Rhodesia, on the other hand, there are two hundred thousand whites as against two and a half million blacks. Sir Roy Welensky is in a peculiar position. In 1953, a Federation was formed out of three diverse entities: Southern Rhodesia, which had won dominion status (like Canada, though with a few more restrictions) in 1923; Northern Rhodesia, with its rich copper mines, which is a protectorate of Britain; and Nyasaland, with its two million seven hundred thousand blacks and only eight thousand six hundred whites, which is also a protectorate. Welensky's aim was to eventually win dominion status for the whole Federation, thus freeing it from Britain's control.

The great power struggle now going on in Africa is three-cornered: among the African, the foreign power, and the settler population. The settler class constitutes a "third force" which is not subject to world pressures. By stealth, ruse and force, it hopes to continue to maintain its white supremacy and its privilege. Welensky therefore speaks of "racial partnership" to appease opinion in Britain until the Federation can be granted dominion status. Then he can do as he pleases. Unfortunately for Welensky, the Nyasaland crisis in February 1959 aroused public furor in Great Britain and set his program back for some time to come, if not permanently. No doubt the Tory government would like to help its ally, Welensky, but whether it can remains in doubt. Chances are that despite the imprisonment of Banda and many other nationalists, they will make considerable gains in the near future.

The place where the gravest battle impends is South Africa. Here the arithmetic of the situation is more adverse to the Africans than anywhere else. There are three million whites as against nine and a half million blacks, and about two million Indians and mulattoes. The Union of South Africa is a dominion, not under British controls, and the white Afrikaaner (not to be confused with the African), who runs the government,

is a humorless, dedicated white supremacist. Here race relations are more tense than anywhere else on the continent. The Negroes' leaders are banned and banished; Negroes are segregated to easily-controlled suburbs, such as a Meadowlands, outside Johannesburg; they are harassed by hundreds of thousands of arrests and imprisonments for the most trivial offenses.

To add insult to injury, the government is now implementing a Bantustan plan to resettle hundreds of thousands of Africans in the reserves. The five Bantustans theoretically are to be independent black republics—some day. Here, on thirteen per cent of the land, sixty per cent of the population will be expected to have its roots, eking out a miserable existence and working at the white man's farms, mines and factories only as transients. The only Bantustan in existence so far, Transkei, is run by African stooges of the European government, which has full veto power over their acts. What the regime hopes to accomplish through such hysterical maneuvers is to maintain a more favorable ratio of whites to blacks in the city areas, where one-third of the Africans now live. By the year 2000, this ratio is expected to rise to 321 for blacks for every 100 whites. But under Bantustan it is hoped to reduce the proportion to 160 Negroes to 100 whites, a manageable ratio, the government believes.

Liberal South Africans believe that before the issue is resolved there will be much blood-letting. Every day when I was in the country there was another riot. Though the nationalist movement is relatively weak, the struggle continues, usually spontaneously. African women are told they cannot sell home-made beer; they organize a boycott against the government-owned beer halls in Cato Manor, Durban, and riots and demonstrations take place. They are told they must destroy some of their sick or thin cattle, and more riots break out. In the dark of night, sugar plantations take fire. Exposés of slave labor on European farms lead to long boycotts of potatoes. A rise in bus fares and there are still more boycotts. The situation is so electric and rapport between the races so tenuous that every action brings a reaction, even if it is unorganized and spontaneous.

The white population in South Africa—especially the sixty per cent that is descendant of the Dutch, the Afrikaaners—is determined to keep *baaskap* in perpetuity. An old man, who participated in the Boer War a half century ago, explained the philosophy of *baaskap* to me in the most crass terms I have ever heard. The world, he said, "stinks with inequality" and all defeated people must pay the price for their defeat. Though he is deeply religious—he reads the Bible to his servants every night—he insisted that "all religions serve the interests of the ruling class" and that the Afrikaaner's religion is no different. Brotherhood, he said, is a dead-

letter everywhere. Why should it exist, he asked me, in South Africa? It is no accident that the majority of Afrikaaners supported Hitler in World War II.

Yet, the day of white supremacy will one day come to an end here too. The rest of the continent is declaring a boycott of South African goods, and not long ago the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions also decided on boycott. Though South Africa is by far the most industrialized and wealthiest country on the continent, it is amenable to world pressures—providing that the United States and the British Commonwealth, which buy more than half its goods and sell it more than half its imports, rise to the occasion. When the inevitable conflict occurs, the pressures in the West for action against the white supremacists will be intense.

Recently there has been a split in the white camp. The opposition United Party, has been severed into two wings. The progressive wing, though it believes in segregation, is fearful of the consequences of the Verwoerd policy.

Crime is reaching monumental proportions. There are 1,992 murders each year in a country that is less than twice as populous as London. (London has only thirty murders a year, New York 354.) More than one and a half million criminal convictions take place annually—about one for every ten people. Efficiency is relatively low because the black man cannot advance, no matter how capable he is, and the white worker feels secure in his "reserved" job, even if he is a poor craftsman. The potential mass market for South Africa's manufacture is only a tiny portion of what it might be, both internally and externally, if there were not worldwide antagonism to the *apartheid* policy. The progressives want to moderate the governmental policy because they fear the consequences for their industry and their political status. How influential this new group will be is not yet known, but they do have a following, and lately they have won the support of Harry Oppenheimer, the diamond king, who used to give considerable sums to the United Party.

A Liberal Party, led by novelist Alan Paton, takes a stand against segregation entirely, and though it has little support amongst whites, it is a voice of conscience for South Africa which pulls many Europeans to the left.

As Chief Albert Luthuli, the banished leader of the African nationalists, points out:

We have a weapon that will bring sense to the white man. Economically he is in our hands from birth to death. We bring him up, we work his factories and mines when he becomes an adult. We even cover his grave when he dies. We will use our strength as workers and peasants, stage boycotts and stay-at-homes until we achieve victory.

(The concluding part of Sidney Lens' report on Africa will appear next month.)

LETTERS . . .

Dear Editors:

New York

Arthur Mitzman ("Not SANE Enough," October 1959) criticized the SANE platform which has sought a test ban under controls and inspection. We have sought the inclusion of this feature for an end to tests for two reasons: the first, because no other policy with regard to testing has any political relevance in the United States (this is not the case in Britain), and second, because a controlled and inspected test ban will set the precedents and give the world the experience it very much needs before it can logically consider any further steps in disarmament and arms control. This is a point at which the mechanism and precedents can be established without raising the question of a change in military status of any of the contending powers *vis-a-vis* the others.

We feel it is quite clear that the most important thing is to make a beginning on a process which once begun will be extremely difficult to reverse—more important than it is to adopt the stand with which many of us would agree, but one which has no political viability . . .

I assume that basically Mr. Mitzman is concerned that SANE has gone beyond the confines of hard-core peace groups and has developed its own momentum and direction. The basic question, I would think, is whether or not it is useful to have an organization exist and operate within the framework of what is politically useful and relevant, with the hope that it may succeed in some small way in motivating many people to contribute to creating a new climate of public opinion.

Donald Keys
Executive Director

National Committee For A Sane Nuclear Policy

Dear Editors:

New York

In his excellent editorial in December's *LIBERATION*, David Dellinger complains that there were no public meetings to honor the civil disobedients of Omaha Action. Certainly the apathy of many pacifists to this heroic occasion cannot be overstressed. However, there was one demonstration on their behalf. This was the Town Crier demonstration in New York City. It aimed at protesting the news black-out on Omaha Action and the Vigil at Fort Detrick and sought to publicize and explain these events. Led by Scott Herrick dressed as a Town Crier ringing a bell and proclaiming "Hear Ye, All Is Not Well," we paraded with picket signs and distributed hundreds of leaflets in the midtown area of New York. In all about four hundred people heard the speeches.

I should like to invite anyone in the New York area who is anxious to support such actions to join the Sunday Action and Discussion Group which planned the Town Crier Demonstration. Call LY-5-3188 any evening around 6:30.

Robin Prising

Dear Editors:

Washington, D. C.

As a psycho-analytically oriented clinical psychologist, and as the wife of a subscriber to *LIBERATION*, I wish to inquire what your rationale was in printing the poem "Lament", by Richard Mayes, p. 6 of the December '59 issue. Perhaps this inquiry betrays my abysmal ignorance of modern poetry. I would appreciate knowing your thoughts.

(Mrs.) Caryl Marsh

Ed. note: The editors felt it to be a good poem that makes a statement about our contemporary society that is tragic but effective.

The SPU attempts to break through student apathy by presenting, as forcefully and dramatically as possible, the alternatives to war and militarism.

s t u d e n t

The SPU does **not** attempt to set a definite program for its members. All action and directions of study are determined by the individual members and local groups.

p e a c e

In April 1959, the SPU was a vague idea in the minds of a handful of Chicago area people. By January of this year, it had over two hundred members on thirty campuses.

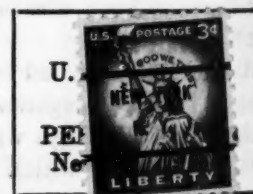
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